

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 687

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SUBJECT: FINLAND-- ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT, 1972-1973

REF: CERP 0001; EUROPARA FINLAND; HELSINKI A-66

1. THIS MESSAGE CONTAINS THE SUMMARY OF THE ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR FINLAND; THE FULL TEXT IS TRANSMITTED BY HELSINKI A-66.
2. POLICY OBJECTIVES: BASIC US POLICY OBJECTIVES IN FINLAND ARE TO FOSTER ITS CONTINUED INDEPENDENCE, POLITICAL DEMOCRACY, FREE MARKET ECONOMY AND A TRUE NEUTRALITY AND TO INCREASE US EXPORTS TO FINLAND.
3. THE SCENE. IN PURSUING THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES, THE US HAS ONLY LIMITED LEVERAGE IN THE FINNISH AREA. THE COUNTRY' S GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION AND POST- WAR HISTORY HAVE DICTATED A FOREIGN POLICY WHICH EMPHASIZES ESPECIALLY GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CLOSE TIES WITH THE NORDIC NEIGHBORS. WHILE STILL WARY OF A POSSIBLE NEGATIVE SOVIET REACTION, FINNS ARE CAUTIOUSLY MOVING TOWARD THE SIGNING OF A FREE- TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE COMMON MARKET (EC) BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. AS A SOP TO THE SOVIETS FOR THIS ESSENTIAL, LONG- RANGE ECONOMIC BOND WITH WESTERN EUROPE, THE FINNS ARE NEGOTIATING A SPECIAL AGREEMENT WITH COMECON, THE
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FIRST CAPITALIST COUNTRY TO DO SO. THE AGREEMENT IS CONSIDERED MORE OF FORM THAN SUBSTANCE. MEANWHILE, THE FINNS IN RECENT YEARS HAVE SHAPED A POLICY OF " ACTIVE NEUTRALITY" IN AN EFFORT TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE COUNTRY' S STATUS. IN THE PAST YEAR THE FRUITS OF THIS POLICY HAVE BEEN, IN FINNISH EYES, ACHIEVED IN PART THROUGH: (1) THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION IN HELSINKI OF PHASE ONE OF SALT, AND THE CONVENING IN THE FINNISH CAPITAL OF THE MULTI-LATERAL PREPARATORY TALKS ON A CSCE AND, (2) THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE TWO GERMANIES WHICH INCLUDED, WITH RESPECT TO EAST GERMANY, A TREATY WHICH CONTAINED AT LEAST A VAGUE REFERENCE TO FINLAND' S STRIVING FOR NEUTRALITY. THE IMAGE OF FINNISH NEUTRAL IMPARTIALITY WAS TARNISHED, HOWEVER, WITH A HASTY RECOGNITION OF NORTH VIETNAM AT THE HEIGHT OF THE US BOMBING OF HANOI AT THE END OF THE YEAR. IN THE LATTER HALF OF LAST YEAR A BIAS DETRIMENTAL TO SOME US INTERESTS WAS ALSO DISCERNIBLE IN OFFICIAL FINNISH ATTITUDES TOWARD US ACTIVITIES WITH VIETNAM OVERTONES. THIS TOOK THE FORM OF HIGH LEVEL CRITICISM, FOR THE FIRST TIME, OF US WARFARE IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND A LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR US NAVAL VISITS. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE VIETNAM WAR SHOULD ALLEVIATE THIS SITUATION.

4. AS WORLDWIDE ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON FINLAND DURING THE CSCE TALKS, THE COMPLEX FINNISH POLITICAL SITUATION, WHICH INCLUDED TWO CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT, THE PASSAGE OF EXCEPTIONAL LEGISLATION TO DETOUR THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND INSTEAD TO EXTEND PRESIDENT KEKKONEN' S MANDATE BY FOUR YEARS, AS WELL AS THE HESITANCY TO SIGN THE EC AGREEMENT, PRODUCED A RASH OF EDITORIALIZING IN WESTERN EUROPEAN PAPERS ABOUT FINLAND' S SUBSERVIENCE TO MOSCOW. FINLAND' S UNENVIABLE POSITION WAS SEEN TO JUSTIFY THE TERM " FINLANDIZATION," IN VOGUE IN SOME QUARTERS IN EUROPE TO DESCRIBE THE EROSION OF INDEPENDENCE BY DEFAULT IN THE FACE OF A POWERFUL SOVIET INFLUENCE. FINNS, WHILE ACUTELY AWARE OF THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY THEIR JUXTAPOSITION TO THE USSR, NONETHELESS TOOK UMBRAGE AT THIS VULGARIZATION OF THEIR COUNTRY' S NAME. SUCH ATTENTION TO THEIR PROBLEM, THEY FEEL, CANNOT HELP BUT COULD WORSEN THEIR PROBLEM.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. IN ORDER TO BUTRESS FINLAND' S INDEPENDENCE AND STRIVING FOR NEUTRALITY WE SHOULD DEMONSTRATE, THROUGH HIGH- LEVEL STATEMENTS, OUR UNDERSTANDING FOR THE FINNISH SITUATION. AN APPROPRIATE TIME WOULD BE THE VISIT OF THE SECRETARY FOR THE OPENING OF THE CSCE.

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WE SHOULD ALSO, IF NECESSARY, REMIND FINNS THAT NEUTRALITY PRE-SUPPOSES EVEN- HANDED TREATMENT OF ALL COUNTRIES. WE SHOULD SUPPORT FINNISH EFFORTS TO SIGN THE EC AGREEMENT BUT BE ALERT TO POSSIBLE FINNISH ACTIONS RESULTING THEREFROM WHICH DISCRIMINATE AGAINST OUR ABILITY TO COMPETE IN FINNISH MARKETS. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENDORSE FINNISH EFFORTS TO HOST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES.

B. TO INCREASE US VISIBILITY IN FINLAND WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE MORE HIGH- LEVEL VISITS. THE POSSIBLE VISITS OF SECRETARY ROGERS AND MRS. NIXON TO FINLAND IN 1973 CREATE AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY IN THIS REGARD. NAVAL VISITS TO FINNISH PORTS SHOULD BE CONTINUED BUT PERHAPS WITH CALLS AT HELSINKI ONLY ON ALTERNATE YEARS. MORE FREQUENT VISITS TO FINLAND OF LEADERS AND EXPERTS IN ALL FIELDS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED. IN- COUNTRY TRAVEL BY EMBASSY OFFICERS SHOULD BE EXPANDED. TRAVEL FUNDS ADEQUATE FOR THIS BASIC EMBASSY REQUIREMENT MUST BE AUTHORIZED.

C. TO INCREASE FINNISH UNDERSTANDING OF THE US WE SHALL CONTINUE TO OBJECT TO BIASED RADIO AND TV TREATMENT OF THE US AND OFFER BALANCED MATERIAL. WE WILL INCREASE INFORMATION ACTIVITY AMONG YOUTH. (TO THIS END A NEW YOUTH OFFICER POSITION HAS BEEN REQUESTED; SUCH A POSITION HAS ALSO BEEN RECOMMENDED IN THE RECENT EUROPARA FINLAND.) WE SHOULD EXPAND THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM THROUGH APPROPRIATED FUNDS, A POLICY DISCONTINUED IN 1967. WE SHOULD SUPPORT TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LARGE, LEAGUE OF FINNISH- AMERICAN SOCIETIES, INCLUDING THE LEAGUE' S EFFORTS TO BUILD A CULTURAL CENTER. WE SHOULD AGAIN INVOLVE FINLAND IN CU' S CULTURAL PRESENTATION PROGRAM.

D. TO INCREASE US EXPORTS TO FINLAND WE SHOULD REVERSE THE CURRENT TREND AND OBTAIN GREATER US PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL TRADE FAIRS. WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE US FIRMS TO TAKE PART IN IOGA MISSIONS, STEP UP EFFORTS TO LOCATE LOCAL AGENTS FOR US FIRMS EXHIBITING AT THE STOCKHOLM TRADE CENTER, AND EXPLORE IN GREATER DEPTH THE POSSIBILITIES FOR EXPANDING US EXPORTS TO THE USSR BY UTILIZING FINNISH TRADE CONTACTS.
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